(b) if so, the details of discussions held with participating countries indicating whether India's image as a space power was enhanced; and

(c) whether Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) would be able to tap more export market for space technology and good relationship with international agencies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES, AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL AND TRAINING, DEPARTMENT OF PENSIONS AND PENSIONERS WELFARE OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNAL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF ATOMIC ENERGY AND SPACE (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir. India hosted the Second Ministerial Conference of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission (UN ESCAP) for Asia and the Pacific on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific during November 15—20, 1999 at New Delhi.

(b) The conference deliberated on the achievements of the countries of the Asia Pacific region in utilising space technology for national development and identified strategy and action plan towards improving quality of life through enhanced use of space technology in various fields such as integrated earth observation and spatial information, satellite communication and infrastructure, national capacity building and regional cooperation. The Conference drafted the Delhi Declaration, launching the second phase of the Regional Space Applications Programme of ESCAP. Many countries expressed appreciation at the significant progress India has made in the development and use of space technology for national development which was highlighted through presentations at the Conference and the parallel activities namely science symposium and technical exhibition.

(c) Yes, Sir. Several countries have expressed interest for expanded cooperation with India in the area of space technology and applications. This is also expected to result in a greater role for India in the commercial sector.

Complaints regarding delay in sanctioning projects under MPLADs

1678. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether complaints have been received by Government regarding delay in sanctioning the projects under MPLAD Scheme;

(b) if so, the number of such complaints and the action taken by Government;

(c) whether it is also a fact that under this Scheme a lot of time is taken in correspondence to release the money which affects the ongoing projects; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government to sanction the projects and issue the amount to the concerned District authorities at the earliest?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) and (b) Complaints from Six (6) MPs have been received during the period 01.01.1999 to 31.10.1999 regarding delay in sanctioning the projects under MPLADS. On each occasion when such a complaint is received a report is called for from the concerned authorities of the State Government and they are advised to take corrective action.

(c) and (d) MPLADS funds are released on receipt of an expenditure statement showing the unsanctioned balance of less than Rs. 50 lakhs. For this purpose a proforma has already been circulated to all the DCs. The DCs have also been advised to sanction the works recommended by the MPs as per their entitlement without waiting for the receipt of funds from this Ministry and to send a report in the prescribed format every month so that funds may be released to the fullest extent. The MPs have also been requested to give recommendations for sufficient works to the concerned Collector for full utilisation of MPLADS funds as per their entitlement.